



**St. John Of the Desert**  
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**“Why Go To Church?”**

We go to Church because:

- *No matter what we do, we cannot pull ourselves up out of the quicksand of the condition of separation from God on our own.*
- *It is as if we were sinking in quicksand separated from any hope of salvation and God extended a hand to us through His Son Jesus Christ.*

The imagery in the fresco of the “Creation of Humankind” by Michelangelo in the Sistine chapel portrays this reality.

What do we see in the fresco?

What we see is the outstretched hand of God, with Him almost touching the outstretched hand of Adam reaching out towards God to receive the gift of creation.

What does it mean?

This image may be used to describe the Liturgy as the space between the fingers that are not quite touching. The space represents the separation between God and humanity. Liturgy bridges that division and fills the space between God and humanity. The outstretched hand of Adam is the sign of humanity receiving that gift.

- By accepting that extended hand we begin to be lifted out of that sure death.
- We are not only separated from God, we are separated from our own true self – our own true nature. We are less than human because we are not united with God.
- Through our Baptism we have entered into His Household, we are no longer citizens under the reign of death, we are citizens of the heavenly Father’s Kingdom!
- This generous outreach of God for our redemption and salvation we call “Divine Grace” and the most important way that He has shown that grace is through His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Our moral life is learning to accept the generosity of God and “partake of the Divine Nature” (2:14 Peter) and that begins with the Liturgy.
- Amid all the turmoil in this world, there is something (the Church) that is steadfast and persistent. Something that gives meaning and purpose to the world and our lives in it.

As you already know, the donation basket for our coffee hour is to collect funds to build some very much needed classrooms for the Children Religious Education. Well, our children are planning to have a Bake Sale next Sunday after the Divine Liturgy to speed-up the process. Be sure to stop by their table in the hall and check-out all the goodies they made. Please support their efforts. Thank you and God bless you!

**Do not forget the hungry!** (Collection Basket at the door)

**OCTOBER 23, 2011**

**3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS - HOLY APOSTLE JAMES, SON OF ALPHEUS**

**LK 8:27-39**

**2 COR 11:31-12:9**

**ZONE 2**

**St. John of the Desert Calendar**

<i>Sunday, October 30</i>	9:00 AM 10:20 AM 10:30 AM	<i>Children Religious Education Doxology Divine Liturgy Followed by the Social Hour</i>
<i>(+) Gloria Herro (Memorial), (+) Jay Jabour, (+) Kevin Mulvihill, John Skaff, Rose Petersen</i>		

**Today’s Intentions:**

- For the Health and Salvation of Fr. Gerry Murphy by Kh. Simone
- For the Health and Salvation of John Skaff by Jim, Pauline & Denise Hamra; Paul, Emily, Jeff & Sophia Hamra; Teresa & Alexander Malkoon
- For the Repose of the Soul of Nasri Ishak by Mary Ishak
- For the Repose of the Soul of Jay Jabour by Mary Herro
- For the Repose of the Soul of Gloria Herro
- For the Repose of the Soul of Jack Kelly by Joseph Davis

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS**

Fr. Stephen Washko, Eric Rimmer, Mary Kostisak, Andre and Osama Eid, Lynn Hume, Linda Herro, Kafa Dababneh, Camille Holt, Deacon Bryan McNeil, Pilar Alonso, Refga Sayegh, Jennifer Basha, Georgette Herro, Rose Petersen, Bo Bolinaga and Pauline Hamra.

**Sometimes we never see the good that results from our thorns**

Paul’s thorn in the flesh became his way of seeing God freeing him from pride. God did not take away this thorn but emptied it of its power, using this “messenger of Satan” to bring Paul to a deeper level of spiritual maturity, Satan notwithstanding.

The teaching Paul drew from his experience is best expressed in his Epistle to the Romans. “*We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to His purpose*” (Rom 8:28).

Sometimes we never see the good that results from our thorns; yet the person of deep faith trusts that God is at work nonetheless. I may want something, even something good, and not see that it’s dangerous to my spiritual life.

Paul saw that Christ’s work in the world is not to remove thorns but to enable us to meet them with the loving presence of God. When we are more aware of that divine presence than of our hardships, we can understand how Paul – beset as he was by his thorn in the flesh – could say, “*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*” (1 Thess 5:16-18).

**THE BISHOP’S APPEAL BEGINS:**

Our Melkite Church in America needs you! Without your generous support of the Bishop’s Appeal many vital works of our Church, such as—seeking and training new priests and deacons to serve our people, publishing SOPHIA magazine, fostering spiritual renewal throughout our Eparchy, caring for our aging and ailing clergy, and preparing our young people for church leadership—will not be able to be accomplished. That is why Bishop Nicholas asks for 100% participation by every Melkite family in our Eparchy and that every Melkite household in the U.S. give at least \$100-\$200 each year to support our Eparchy in America. Christ relies upon your generosity to accomplish His great work! Please respond to our Bishop’s call and take personal responsibility for your Melkite Eparchy.